

ORDINANCE NO. 5498

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AMENDING SUBSECTION E OF SECTION 8.04.020 AND SUBSECTIONS C AND D OF SECTION 22.04.020 OF THE SANTA BARBARA MUNICIPAL CODE CONCERNING LOCAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLERS

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Findings

1. Climatic Conditions

- A. The City of Santa Barbara is located in a semi-arid Mediterranean type climate. It annually experiences extended periods of high temperatures with little or no precipitation. Hot, dry winds, ("Sundowners") which may reach speeds of 60 m.p.h. or greater, are also common to the area. These climatic conditions cause extreme drying of vegetation and common building materials. In addition, the high winds generated often cause road obstructions such as fallen trees. Frequent periods of drought and low humidity add to the fire danger. This predisposes the area to large destructive fires. In addition to directly damaging or destroying buildings, these fires also disrupt utility services throughout the area. The City of Santa Barbara and adjacent front country have a history of such fires, including the 1990 Painted Cave Fire and the 1977 Sycamore Canyon Fire. In 2007, the city was impacted by the back country Zaca Fire and in 2008 the Tea Fire destroyed over 150 homes within the city.
- B. The climate alternates between extended periods of drought and brief flooding conditions. Flood conditions may affect the Fire Department's ability to respond to a fire or emergency condition. Floods also disrupt utility services to buildings and facilities within the City.
- C. The city's core area continues to become more concentrated, with new multi-storied mixed-use structures whose occupants, along with the structures themselves, could be vulnerable to uncontrolled fires due to lack of available water. This necessitates the need for additional and on-site fire protection features.
- D. These dry climatic conditions and winds contribute to the rapid spread of even small fires originating in high-density housing or vegetation. These fires spread very quickly and create a need for increased levels of fire protection. The added protection of fire sprinkler systems and other fire

protection features will supplement normal fire department response by providing immediate protection for the building occupants and by containing and controlling the fire spread to the area of origin. Fire sprinkler systems will also reduce the use of water for firefighting by extinguishing fires at an early stage.

2. Topographical conditions:

- A. Natural slopes of 15 percent or greater generally occur throughout the foothills of Santa Barbara, especially in the High Fire Hazard areas such as the Foothill and Extreme Foothill zones. With much of the populated lower elevation areas already built upon, future residential growth is and will continue to occur on steeper slopes and in areas with greater constraints in terrain such as the Foothill and Extreme Foothill zones. Geographic and land-use constraints throughout the city have resulted in greater density along with a large number of mixed use projects, combining residential with commercial occupancies.
- B. Traffic and circulation congestion is an ongoing problem throughout the region. Traffic flow in and through Santa Barbara is limited by the transverse Santa Ynez Mountains, which provide limited passage to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The narrow corridor that Highway 101 occupies is subject to traffic delays under normal conditions and emergency events can render the highway impassable. This has the double effect of preventing traffic from leaving the city and potentially preventing emergency workers, who often live out of town, from entering. This condition existed for several days during the La Conchita slide in 2005 and it disrupted the return of city workers who live in the Ventura area. At various times in the city's history, Highway 101 has also been closed north of the city due to mudslides, fires and flooding, most recently near Gaviota Pass, where a fire also temporarily closed the Rail access.

In addition, roads in the foothills are narrow, often steep and vulnerable to emergency conditions. Some of the older roadways are below current access standards and pose challenges to responding emergency vehicles, especially fire engines. These challenges are exacerbated in the event of an evacuation, particularly in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill zones.

- C. These topographical conditions combine to create a situation which places fire department response time to fire occurrences at risk, and makes it necessary to provide automatic on-site fire-extinguishing systems and other protection measures to protect occupants and property.

3. Geological conditions:

The City of Santa Barbara region is a densely populated area that has buildings constructed over and near a vast and complex network of faults that are believed to be capable of producing future earthquakes similar or greater in size than the 1994 Northridge and the 1971 Sylmar earthquakes. Known faults in the city include the Lavigia, North Channel Slope, Mesa and Mission Ridge-More Ranch faults. Additional faults near the city would also be capable of disruption of services, including fire protection. The Southern California Earthquake Center predicts that there is an 80-90% probability of a magnitude 7.0 earthquake somewhere in Southern California before the year 2024. Regional planning for reoccurrence of earthquakes is recommended by the State of California, Department of Conservation.

- A. Previous earthquakes have been accompanied by disruption of traffic flow and fires. A severe seismic event has the potential to negatively impact any rescue or fire suppression activities because it is likely to create obstacles similar to those indicated under the high wind section above. With the probability of strong aftershocks there exists a need to provide increased protection for anyone on upper floors of buildings. The October 17, 1989, Loma Prieta earthquake resulted in one major fire in the Marina District (San Francisco). When combined with the 34 other fires locally and over 500 responses, the department was taxed to its fullest capabilities. The Marina fire was difficult to contain because mains supplying water to the district burst during the earthquake. In addition to gas mains, individual gas and electric service connections to residences may provide both fuel and ignition sources during a seismic event. This situation creates the need for both additional fire protection and automatic on-site fire protection for building occupants.
- B. Road circulation features located throughout Santa Barbara also make amendments reasonably necessary. There are major roadways, highways and flood control channels that create barriers and slow response times. Hills, particularly in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill zones, slopes, street and storm drain design accompanied by occasional heavy rainfall, cause roadway flooding and landslides and at times may make an emergency access route impassable. Much of Sycamore Canyon lies in an area subject to geologic activity, as witnessed by the recent closure of the road due to the slide potential.

The climatic, topographical, and geological conditions described above make it prudent to rely upon automatic fire sprinkler systems to mitigate extended fire department response times. The automatic sprinkler requirements specified in this ordinance are intended to lessen life safety hazards and keep fires manageable with potentially reduced fire flow (water) requirements for a given structure.

SECTION 2. Subsection E of Section 8.04.020 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code is deleted in its entirety and readopted to read as follows:

E. **Chapter 9** of the International Fire Code is amended as follows:

1. **Section 903.2 “Where required.”** of Section 903 of the International Fire Code is amended to add Section 903.2.18 to read as follows:

903.2.18 City of Santa Barbara Local Requirements. Approved sprinkler systems shall be provided throughout a building in connection with the projects or changes of occupancy listed in this Section 903.2.18 or as specified elsewhere in this Section 903.2, whichever is more protective.

903.2.18.1 New Buildings, Generally. The construction of a new building containing any of the following occupancies: A, B, E, F, H, I, L, M, R, S or U.

Exceptions: A new building containing a Group U occupancy that is constructed in the City’s designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 500 square feet of floor area. A new building containing a U occupancy that is constructed outside the City’s designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 5000 square feet of floor area.

903.2.18.2 New Buildings in the High Fire Hazard Area. The construction of any new building within the City’s designated High Fire Hazard Area.

Exception: A new building containing a Group U occupancy that is constructed in the City’s designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 500 square feet of floor area.

903.2.18.3 Additions to Buildings Other than Single Family Residences. The addition of floor area to an existing building that contains any occupancy other than Group R, Division 3.

903.2.18.4 Remodels of Buildings Other than Single Family Residences. The remodel or alteration of the interior of an existing building that contains any occupancy other than Group R, Division 3, where the floor area of the portion of the building that is modified or altered exceeds 50% of the existing floor area of the building. For purposes of this section, all modifications or alterations to an existing building that occur after the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section shall be counted in the aggregate toward the 50% threshold measured against the floor area of the building as it existed on the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section.

903.2.18.5 Additions to or Remodels of Single Family Residences. The addition of floor area to, or the modification or alteration of the interior of, an existing building that contains a Group R, Division 3 occupancy, where the floor area of the portion

of the building that is added, modified, or altered exceeds 75% of the existing floor area of the building. For purposes of this section, all additions, modifications, or alterations to an existing building that occur after the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section shall be counted in the aggregate toward the 75% threshold measured against the floor area of the building as it existed on the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section.

903.2.18.6 Change of Occupancy to a Higher Hazard Classification.

Any change of occupancy in an existing building where the occupancy changes to a higher hazard classification.

903.2.18.7 Computation of Square Footage. For the purposes of this Section 903.2.18, the floor area of buildings shall be computed in accordance with the definition of "Floor area, Gross" provided in Section 1002.1 of the California Building Code.

903.2.18.8 Existing use. Except as provided in this Section 903.2, any building in existence at the time of the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section may continue with such use if such use was legal at the time.

2. **Section 907 "Fire Alarm and Detection Systems"** of the International Fire Code is amended to add Section 907.1.5 to read as follows:

907.1.5 Mixed Use Occupancies. Where residential occupancies are combined with commercial occupancies, a fire alarm system shall be installed which notifies all occupants in the event of a fire. The system shall include automatic smoke detection throughout the commercial and common areas. In addition, a notification system shall be installed in a manner and location approved by the fire code official that indicates the presence of residential dwelling units in accordance with Municipal Code Section 8.04.030 B.

SECTION 3. Subsections C and D of Section 22.04.020 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code are deleted in their entirety and readopted to read as follows:

C. Section 903.2 "Where Required." of Section 903 is amended to add Section 903.2.18 to read as follows:

903.2.18 City of Santa Barbara Local Requirements. Approved sprinkler systems shall be provided throughout a building in connection with the projects or changes of occupancy listed in this Section 903.2.18 or as specified elsewhere in this Section 903.2, whichever is more protective.

903.2.18.1 New Buildings, Generally. The construction of a new building containing any of the following occupancies: A, B, E, F, H, I, L, M, R, S or U.

Exceptions: A new building containing a Group U occupancy that is constructed in the City's designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a

sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 500 square feet of floor area. A new building containing a U occupancy that is constructed outside the City's designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 5000 square feet of floor area.

903.2.18.2 New Buildings in the High Fire Hazard Area. The construction of any new building within the City's designated High Fire Hazard Area.

Exception: A new building containing a Group U occupancy that is constructed in the City's designated High Fire Hazard Area is not required to provide a sprinkler system as long as the building does not exceed 500 square feet of floor area.

903.2.18.3 Additions to Buildings Other than Single Family Residences. The addition of floor area to an existing building that contains any occupancy other than Group R, Division 3.

903.2.18.4 Remodels of Buildings Other than Single Family Residences. The remodel or alteration of the interior of an existing building that contains any occupancy other than Group R, Division 3, where the floor area of the portion of the building that is modified or altered exceeds 50% of the existing floor area of the building. For purposes of this section, all modifications or alterations to an existing building that occur after the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section shall be counted in the aggregate toward the 50% threshold measured against the floor area of the building as it existed on the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section.

903.2.18.5 Additions to or Remodels of Single Family Residences. The addition of floor area to, or the modification or alteration of the interior of, an existing building that contains a Group R, Division 3 occupancy, where the floor area of the portion of the building that is added, modified, or altered exceeds 75% of the existing floor area of the building. For purposes of this section, all additions, modifications, or alterations to an existing building that occur after the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section shall be counted in the aggregate toward the 75% threshold measured against the floor area of the building as it existed on the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section.

903.2.18.6 Change of Occupancy to a Higher Hazard Classification. Any change of occupancy in an existing building where the occupancy changes to a higher hazard classification.

903.2.18.7 Computation of Square Footage. For the purposes of this Section 903.2.18, the floor area of buildings shall be computed in accordance with the definition of "Floor area, Gross" provided in Section 1002.1 of the California Building Code.

903.2.18.8 Existing use. Except as provided in this Section 903.2, any building in existence at the time of the effective date of the ordinance adopting this section may continue with such use if such use was legal at the time.

D. [Reserved.]

Section 4. This ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following adoption. The provisions of this ordinance shall apply to any building permit application for the construction, addition, or remodel of any structure that is submitted to the City on or after the effective date of this ordinance; provided, however, the provisions of this ordinance shall not apply to an application for a building permit for the construction of a residential structure to replace a residential structure that was damaged or destroyed by the Tea Fire or the Jesusita Fire and where the ownership of the property has not changed since the date of the fire.